



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
Walla Walla District
Public Affairs Office

News Release

News Release No. 01-04

Date:
January 20, 2001

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Corps upping Dworshak flows for region's power needs

Orofino, Idaho, -- Dam operators will begin increasing flows from nearby Dworshak Reservoir early Monday to increase power produced at its dams in the region, according to an official from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"We are responding to requests from the Bonneville Power Administration for additional production to help it meet demands for electricity during the power emergency that has been declared in the Pacific Northwest," said Charlie Krahenbuhl, manager for the Corps' eastern operating area office of the Walla Walla District. "We'll begin releasing the extra water after 5 a.m."

Flows out of Dworshak at this time of year are normally 1,300 cubic feet per second. The increased discharge will bring that total to an average of 6,000 cfs. This additional flow, in the river system, could produce as much as an additional 500 megawatts of electricity for the region. That much power is enough to provide residential service for 100,000 homes using an average of five kilowatts.

All the water will pass through the largest generator at Dworshak on the North Fork of the Clearwater River. The water will be used repeatedly after it passes down the main stem of the Clearwater River and joins the flow in the Snake River.

On the Snake River, four Walla Walla District dams in Washington will be able to use the additional flow for power production. Those dams are: Lower Granite, near Pomeroy; Little Goose, near Starbuck; Lower Monumental, near Kahlottus; and, Ice Harbor, near Burbank. The added flow will pass from the Snake River into the Columbia River.

Four Corps dams in Oregon will also use the added flow for power production. McNary Dam, operated by the Walla Walla District, is near Umatilla. The other three Corps dams in Oregon that will use this additional flow are operated by the Portland District. Those are: John Day Dam, near Rufus; The Dalles Dam, at The Dalles; and, Bonneville Dam, near Cascade Locks.

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People fishing should take every precaution during the higher flows which will cause higher river elevation and faster currents in the North Fork and the main stem of the Clearwater River.

"We want to remind everyone to be safe while they enjoy the outdoors during these higher flows," said Krahenbuhl.

-30- Editors' Note: For questions, call Dutch Meier, after hours at (509) 520-1468.